

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the April edition of Teamspirit.

Please give us your feedback!

As you know Teamspirit is a bi-monthly publication which goes to all branch committee members as well as national support group committee members across the UK. We feel that Teamspirit isn't hitting the mark when it comes to content, frequency and design so we want your thoughts on how we can improve it!

Please provide your thoughts, comments, suggestions and feedback. Send your views to teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk by Friday 31 May.

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Don't forget – the information in the first six sections is for **everyone**, wherever you are in the UK.

Get in touch

We're always keen to hear your feedback, so if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas email teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk, phone 020 8438 0825 or write to Teamspirit, MS Society, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

If you're a newsletter editor, email teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk to receive a version of Teamspirit that you can copy and paste into your branch or regional newsletter.

Branch donations

Branch Name	Earmarked Description	Earmarked	Research	General
Barnsley & District	Imaging Demyelination & Remyelination in PWMS (Grant 951)	£1,500.00		
Blackpool Fylde & Wyre			£1,000.00	
Boston & South Holland	MS Nurses	£500.00		
Braintree	Mesenchymal stem cell research grant number 943/10	£100.00		
Braintree	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£650.00		
Bridgend & District			£140.00	
Cheltenham & North Cotswold				£3,000.00
East Cumbria				£8,000.00
Ely	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£4,000.00		
Hillingdon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,000.00		
Hull Beverley Borough & Holderness			£450.52	
Larne and East Antrim			£2,000.00	
Mendip			£2,000.00	
Milton Keynes & District	MS Helpline	£2,000.00		
Mutual Support			£1,000.00	
North Cornwall & West Devon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£505.00		
North Down and Ards			£5,000.00	
North Norfolk			£10,000.00	
Northampton & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,000.00		

Branch donations

Branch Name	Earmarked Description	Earmarked	Research	General
Rhondda Cynon Taff			£1,000.00	
Rugby & District			£100.00	
Salford & District	Amiloride Clinical Trial in Optic Neuritis (grant 952)	£250.00		
Salford & District	Phenytoin clinical trial (grant 948)	£250.00		
Scunthorpe & District	Cambridge & District Branch	£5,000.00		
South East Northumberland			£50.00	
South Suffolk			£180.00	
Sutton (London Borough of)	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£5,000.00		
Sutton (London Borough of)	MS Helpline	£2,500.00		
Trafford & South West Manchester			£2,000.00	
West Hertfordshire	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,000.00		
Total		£28,255.00	£24,920.52	£11,000.00

These are donations recorded 15 January to 14 March 2013.

News and events

Chief Executive's post-Board report (meeting held 21 March 2013)

Welcome to this update on key aspects from the work of the MS Society's Board of Trustees following its meeting on 21 March 2013. This meeting took place at the MS National Centre in London. The full Board papers are available on the MS Society's website at <http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/board-papers-march-2013-agenda>.

Regular reports

Key features in the Chief Executive's update to the Board and latest management accounts were:

- MS Frontiers is being held on 9-10 May at the Sofitel Hotel, Heathrow and it has already received significant interest. It provides an opportunity for researchers and scientists to meet and discuss the latest in the world of MS Research.
- In February the MS Society marched 20m alongside people with MS to the Department of Work and Pensions to deliver a letter with over 4000 signatures.
- The key objectives for the year financially have been met and the deficit at the year end is lower than budgeted.

Research outcomes and projects and My MS, My Needs

The Board were provided with updates on the outcomes of research projects for 2012 and a short presentation on My MS, My Needs. The Board were proud to see that so many of the projects that the MS Society funded in their early conceptions have come to fruition with treatments made available for people with MS – such as the licensed use of botox for bladder control.

Next Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held at MS National Centre on Thursday 23 May 2013. If you would like to attend as an observer please contact Rebecca Hawkins, Governance Officer, at governance@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0700. The key issues for discussion at this meeting are likely to include:

- Updates from Committees of the Board
- Update on the Service Development Toolkit

If you have any comments or questions please contact me at pgordon@mssociety.org.uk or write to me at MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

Patricia Gordon

Acting Chief Executive
March 2013

News and events

Benefits and MS – a how to guide for Committees

In recent months there have been a number of changes to the assessment criteria for benefits. Combined with constant financial pressures this has led to our Information Team receiving more requests for advice on benefits from people affected by MS.

Although the MS Society does not give advice on benefits we want to ensure everyone affected by MS is able to access up to date information and specialist advice about changes to the benefits system and what they are entitled to.

What we do

- we enable access to the information available and direct people affected by MS to qualified advice
- we work with local benefits advice organisations
- we emphasise the key issues people may need to consider about the impact of MS in their daily life

We've written a '**How to guide**' to help your branch or group give information on benefits to people affected by MS.

It includes:

- guidance on the role of the MS Society, working with external benefits experts and the importance of the impact of MS
- our key messages, practical tips and resources, briefs and templates you can customise, to suit your needs

- where to get support to help you address any issues confidently

Visit our volunteer website, <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk> to access these resources, or contact your local staff member or the Information Team on 020 8438 0799 to find out more.

MS Week update

This year's MS Week will be kicking off on **Monday 29 April - 5 May**. This year's campaign is called "Stop the MS Lottery" and will be based around our report "A lottery of treatment and care: MS services across the UK". This report will document the findings from the "My MS, My Needs" survey, which many of you took part in, and reveals the worrying extent to which people living with MS face a 'lottery' when it comes to accessing treatment and care for their condition.

A campaign microsite has been developed featuring infographics to bring the survey data to life. There are also written case studies and a series of films involving people with MS. We're also asking people to take action – check out the campaign website to see how you can get involved.

For more information about MS Week, contact MSWeek@mssociety.org.uk, visit the MS Week microsite www.mssociety.org.uk/mslottery, or speak to your local LSDO or ADO.

News and events

‘Working Locally’ programme update

You may be aware that we’ve begun a large scale project called ‘Working Locally’, which looks at what we do locally across the UK and what we need to do to ensure we’re meeting the needs of all people affected by MS in the future.

How you can get involved

All Branch Chairs have received a letter from our Chairman Hilary Sears about the programme and the next stage of ‘Working Locally’ involves you. You are a vital part in this programme and will help shape the direction of it. We want your views about what we currently offer locally and what you feel the MS Society’s volunteers, staff, branches and support groups across the UK should focus on, or seek to make available in the future, for people affected by MS.

Please join us in this important discussion. There will be opportunities coming up across the UK to contribute your views, and we’ll continue to provide regular updates in Teamspirit. For more information on ‘Working Locally’ please contact Stewart Long by emailing workinglocally@mssociety.org.uk.

Branch resources – what we’re developing

In 2010, we set up a steering group made up of MS Society volunteers and staff to develop the resources we provide for branches and groups. We asked them to tell us what resources we needed to:

- provide consistent levels of support to all people affected by MS
- enable volunteers in branches and groups to carry out their individual roles
- enable branches and groups to feel confident about developing the functions that support local people affected by MS
- support the work of local and national staff to reduce risk to the MS Society

From this, we started work on:

- ‘Making it work’ – a committee handbook for branches and national support groups, which provides ‘must do’ guidance for committees on MS Society policies and procedures, legal and constitutional requirements
- a range of ‘how to’ guides to supplement the rules of the committee handbook, covering the wide range of roles and functions of branches throughout the UK
- a new volunteer website <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk>, which includes both ‘must do’ and ‘how to’ guidance, along with news, events and a range of downloadable resources

News and events

We now have a Branch Resources Officer in post to co-ordinate this project and we're busy planning a review of the committee handbook (to be reprinted and circulated later this year) and planning how to prioritise the other resources that we need to produce.

With the exception of the committee handbook, we'll use the volunteer website as the key way we share resources. You'll be directed to the website in the first instance, with printed copies of resources and updates available on request. This way, you can feel confident the information you access is up to date and we'll be able to react quickly if anything changes. It'll also cut our printing costs and reduce waste.

Staying safe resources – we need you!

We're about to start work on our staying safe resources, which will cover health and safety, managing assets, disclosure and how we safeguard people we come into contact with.

We need to recruit a group of MS Society content experts – volunteers and staff with the experience and knowledge to help develop these resources. Do you know a lot about one of these subjects, either from your time as a volunteer or from your work? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Please email Danielle Walker on branchresources@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0911 to find out more about how you can get involved.

MS Society volunteer survey

A big thank you to all of you who completed the recent volunteer survey. We had a fantastic response with more than 1,400 volunteers returning the survey.

We heard from volunteers in every part of the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It's encouraging to hear the views of so many of our volunteers.

The results are now being analysed and we'll let you know the full details and our action plan in June. More details will be available in the next Teamspirit so watch this space.

Volunteers to help govern the MS Society

We are looking for new Trustees and members for the Councils of Cymru, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees is to set the strategy and monitor performance. It also agrees the business plan and performance targets on an annual basis. It is responsible for approving each year's budget, monitors compliance with regulator and statutory requirements and oversees a framework of delegation and systems controls.

News and events

All Trustees are expected to share the mission and values of the Society, agree to commit both time and energy to the work of the board. They are all unpaid volunteers.

The Board meets five times a year, and there are also meetings of expert committees (Audit and Risk, Finance, Investment and Governance) on which some Board members sit.

The Board is committed to diverse representation, and are looking for individuals who have experience at Board level in other public or private organisations. We would particularly welcome applications from professionals who have financial, marketing/fundraising, and/or IT skills.

We currently have vacancies for six Trustees.

For more information about becoming a Trustee please contact Rebecca Hawkins for an application pack on rhawkins@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0839.

National Councils

The National Councils are responsible to the Board. Council members are expected to contribute to the development of the Society's strategy, develop annual plans, act as ambassadors and promote, develop and support volunteers.

Councils typically meet four to five times a year. We currently have vacancies for;

- **Cymru: 2**
- **England: 5** (Cheshire & Merseyside; South West; Wessex & West; West Midlands; Yorkshire & the Humber)
- **Northern Ireland: 3**
- **Scotland: 2**

For more information about becoming a Council member in **Cymru** contact:

Matthew Witty

Email: mwitty@mssociety.org.uk

Telephone: 02920 786 676

For more information about becoming a Council member in **England** contact:

Lucy Tennison

Email: englandcouncil@mssociety.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8438 0765

For more information about becoming a Council member in **Northern Ireland** contact:

Ann Wilson

Email: awilson@mssociety.org.uk

Telephone: 02890 802 815

For more information about becoming a Council member in **Scotland** contact:

Rosemary Hastie

Email: rhastie@mssociety.org.uk

Telephone: 0131 335 4062

The deadline for application is **Friday 17 May 2013**. Interviews for Trustees and England, Wales and Northern Ireland Council members will be held in June (late May for Scotland Council candidates) and elections will take place during August and early September, with results announced on the day of the AGM (Saturday 21 September 2013).

News and events

Developing our website for health and social care professionals

People with MS constantly tell us that they want the professionals they engage with to be better informed about MS. For this reason, we're currently developing a section of the MS Society website specifically for professionals.

This new section for professionals will provide access to free online learning courses including an e-learning module on MS for GPs. We'll direct professionals to upcoming courses and training events relevant to them as well as provide access to study grants to support their attendance at training courses. We'll promote a wealth of useful resources and free publications as well as provide funding to set up local information points. There will be opportunities for professionals to learn from each other through our online forums and blogs.

This new section of the website will launch later this year and we need your help to promote it. We'll tell you more when it is ready to go live so watch this space for more information.

What is MS?

In the last issue of Teamspirit, we told you to look out for the new edition of 'What is MS?' in March. If you've been wondering what's happened to it, we still have a little bit of work to do, but it should be ready soon. As soon as we have copies of the new edition available we will be sending samples out to all branches.

Revised MS factsheets

We have recently revised a number of our MS factsheets which you can download from the website or the online shop:

Genes and MS (February 2013)

Hot and Cold – the effects of temperature on MS (February 2013)

Education for children affected by MS (March 2013)

Education for children affected by MS in Scotland (February 2013)

Posture and movement 1 – an introduction (February 2013)

Posture and movement 2 – moving well with MS (February 2013)

News and events

World MS Day is 29 May: Focus on 'Young people and MS'

Each year, World MS Day globally aims to raise awareness of MS amongst those who know very little about it. This year's campaign will focus on young people. At a time when young people may be starting new careers, relationships and making plans for the future, being diagnosed with a chronic and potentially disabling disease like MS can lead them to re-evaluate everything they know.

In May, six inspiring young people from around the world will share the mottos online that give them strength.

You can share your own motto for life on the World MS Day website centred on three themes: identity, relationships and the future. Visit www.worldmsday.org for more information.

Challenge60 – website now live

In the last edition of Teamspirit, we told you about our new fundraising campaign called Challenge60, which aims to raise £250,000 in 60 days between 31 May and 29 July to help fund MS research. The Challenge60 website is now live, and we already have a number of people signed up to run, walk, give up chocolate, dye

their hair and jump out of planes to help us reach our ambitious target.

There are a number of ways to get involved and encourage your fundraisers to help make Challenge60 the biggest and best fundraiser of the year:

- You can sign up to take part yourself – just go to the Challenge60 website at www.challenge60.org.uk, to get some fundraising ideas and set up your own fundraising page.
- Promote Challenge60 in your branch webpage and newsletters.
- Send in your stories to share with the media and other Challenge60 participants. If you're doing a challenge with a difference or feel your story is truly inspiring – let us know!
- Use social media – if you're a keen Facebook or Twitter user, make sure you follow our pages so you can share our Challenge60 updates or post some of your own.

If you would like to sign up to Challenge60 or receive more information, visit the Challenge60 website at www.challenge60.org.uk, contact challenge60@mssociety.org.uk or call on 0845 481 1577.

Research

Vote for your top research questions

Last year the MS Society launched a project to find the 'top 10 unanswered research questions in MS' – giving people affected by MS a voice in setting the MS research agenda.

As part of this project we asked people affected by MS and healthcare professionals to submit questions they want to see answered by research. Submissions ranged from questions about specific symptoms, to treatments to support for everyday life with MS.

We now have an impressive list of questions that need prioritising and we need your help to vote for the questions that are most important to you. In July this year a small workshop will be held to discuss the most voted for questions and to find the top 10 unanswered questions in MS research.

So if you have MS, are affected by MS, care for someone with MS or are an MS healthcare professional – we want to hear from you!

You can vote by completing our survey either online or by post. You will find a link to the survey on our website at www.mssociety.org.uk/JLA or you can request a copy in the post by contacting Mital Patel on mpatel@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0708. The survey will remain open until Friday 24 May 2013.

Support

Short break special offers

We're always working with several organisations to make it easier for people with MS, families and carers to access a wider range of short breaks, holidays and respite care opportunities. Keep an eye on the volunteer microsite for the most up to date offers at <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk> or contact Natalie Pink on shortbreaks@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0805.

We currently have a great opportunity for an MS taster weekend with the Calvert Trust. The Calvert Trust team organise weekend breaks for people with MS, their families and carers at their activity holiday centre in the Kielder Water and Forest Park in Northumberland. The next MS taster weekend is **Friday 24 to Monday 27 May**.

The taster weekends are a great chance to try out activities such as sailing, abseiling, archery and the zip wire. All activities are fully accessible, as is the centre itself and the accommodation. For those who prefer to relax, there is also a hydrotherapy pool, sensory and games rooms and a fully licensed bar.

Prices for the MS taster weekend includes accommodation, meals (self-catering accommodation is also available) and activities. Three nights costs £317 per person, or £488 for the respite care package (over 18s) which includes personal care and support during the weekend.

To book a place, call the Calvert Trust team on 01434 250 232 or email enquiries@calvert-kielder.com

Help towards the cost

Remember that people with MS and their carers may be eligible to apply for a grant towards the cost of their short break from our Short Breaks and Activities Fund. To find out more and apply, contact the grants team on 020 8438 0700 or email grants@mssociety.org.uk, or if you live in Scotland call 0131 335 4050 or email grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk.

Carers Week update

The MS Society is proud to be a partner in Carers Week. From **10 - 16 June**, local groups and organisations across the UK will be taking part in the national Carers Week campaign to improve the lives of carers and the people they care for.

There are many ways MS Society branches can get involved in this year's Carers Week campaign:

Host an event for carers

Ideas for events and activities range from social events and outings, information stands, opportunities to try treatments and therapies, guest speakers, networking events... the list goes on. To register and get a free welcome pack which includes ideas, posters, stickers, flyers and booklets, go to the Carers Week website at www.carersweek.org, or call 020 8438 0805.

Support

Find out what's going on near you

To date over 300 organisations have registered to hold an event. The Carers Week website has a map of all the events, which you can search to find out what's happening in your area. If you're not planning to hold an event, why not find out what your local carers centre is doing and join up, or promote the event to your members.

Promote Carers Week locally

However you're taking part, you can buy promotion and display materials including posters, booklets, t-shirts, bags and banners from the Carers Week shop. Visit shop.carersweek.org.

Encourage carers in your area to fill in the Carers Week survey

The annual Carers Week survey provides the statistics that we use at events with local politicians and peers to campaign and lobby for better support for carers. We need as many carers as possible to fill it in. To promote the survey in your branch or regional newsletters, please include this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/carersweek2013>

Help us find carer case studies

If there are carers in your area who have a story to tell and would be happy to be a media case study, please let us know. The stories are vitally important to help us raise awareness locally during Carers Week. The role would involve being interviewed for an article, and/ or television or radio coverage. We are looking for case studies in Scotland and Eastern England because those are the areas we've been given to secure media coverage in. Contact Andrea Lisher in the press team on 020 8438 0840 or alisher@mssociety.org.uk.

We'll be supporting Carers Week nationally by re-launching our carers grants funds, producing short films on what it means to care for somebody with MS, campaigning and lobbying, getting people talking on social media and making the wider community take notice.

To find out what information and support we can provide for families and carers, contact our information team on 020 8438 0799 or email infoteam@mssociety.org.uk.

Finance

Finance guidance for local support groups

In the Treasurers Handbook 2012 update which was distributed to branch treasurers last year, there was a note that the finance guidance for local support groups was to be updated. We have now made those updates and the new section 3.5 of the Treasurers Handbook is below.

Support groups (which can also be referred to as 'sub groups' or 'sub branches') are groups which are set up to meet a specific set of needs within a local area. If a group wants to manage MS Society funds and operate as part of the MS Society then it has three options:

1 The support group could use their local MS Society branch to account for the funds

The branch treasurer should be kept informed of their activities and should be given all the receipts and invoices relating to their activities. The support group will need to follow the Internal Financial Controls Checklist (IFC) – the branch treasurer will complete and submit this for the group but may check with the group to ensure they are following it.

2 The support group has its own bank account but continues to account for funds through their local branch

If this is the case then:

- the bank account must be an MS Society Barclays cash pooling account set up by the MSNC.

- the signatories on the bank account must be members of the MS Society.
- the signatories will need to inform the membership section of their 'support group' and their role within it. The signatories will need to provide contact details including their residential address.
- the branch treasurer will supply the support group with an IFC checklist for them to complete and return to the treasurer.
- the branch treasurer must be given access to all of the group's accounting records including bank statements.

3 The support group keeps its own bank account and does not use its local branch

It is better for a support group to work with their local MS Society branch but we appreciate this may not be possible or practical in some situations

- complete a full annual branch pro forma and IFC checklist
- follow the branch financial rules
- maintain an MS Society cash pooling account set up by the MSNC
- the signatories on the bank account will need to be members of the MS Society
- the signatories will need to provide contact details for finance including their residential address

For any further information around finances for support groups, contact the Finance Department on 020 8438 0785 or email financesupport@mssociety.org.uk

Finance

Don't let your branch be used for tax evasion

We have recently been made aware of a number of attempts by individuals seeking to use their local branch as a vehicle for illegal tax evasion.

If the MS Society is seen to be used as a vehicle for tax evasion then the Society could be subject to investigation by HM Revenue and Customs and/or the Charity Commission.

To avoid your branch being used in this way you must:

- Not accept a donation where the donor states that part or all the monies must be paid over to an NHS Trust or other organisation or to a specific individual. The only exception to this rule is for grants that have already been awarded by the MS Society.
- Not accept a donation where the donor states that all or part of the monies must be used to purchase a piece of equipment which then must be donated to an NHS Trust or other organisation or to a specific individual.
- Not allow the process for awarding individual support grants to be compromised by someone offering to pay in full or part for the grant (i.e. grants should be awarded based on the application by the individual and not swayed because someone will refund the branch for the value of the grant).

In these instances it is possible the MS Society is being used as a vehicle to reduce a donor's tax liability and may constitute tax evasion. It is also possible that the donor is acting legitimately but it may cause reputational damage if the Society allows itself to be used in this way.

HMRC have made clear that Gift Aid cannot be reclaimed for this type of 'donation' and the Charity Commission state that full details need to be disclosed in the Society's annual report accounts for these types of transactions.

If you have any questions on the above then please email financesupport@mssociety.org.uk.

Fundraising

Mixing bowls at the ready!

Cake Break is off to a flying start with 1,245 registrations to date. We're ahead of this time last year, so we're well on our way to recruiting our target of 3,000 Cake Breakers!

Of course we can't do this without your help. Thank you so much for your support in promoting Cake Break in your area and all your involvement.

Don't forget there's lots of information and resources to help on the volunteer website at <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/cake-break-2013>.

If you have any questions about Cake Break please go to www.cakebreak.org.uk or get in touch on cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk or 0845 481 1577 and we'll be happy to help. Let's get baking to beat MS!

Sainsbury's Charity of the Year application

In the next few weeks Sainsbury's branches will invite nominations from shoppers and staff for a local charity for each store. Selected charities will benefit from a year-long link with their local supermarket, with staff getting involved to organise fundraising events and volunteering for the charity throughout the year.

Many branches were successful in 2012 and being chosen can be a real boost, raising over £2,000 for your branch.

The nomination process is very easy. Shoppers fill in a short nomination form and post it into the 'Local Charity of the Year' voting box in the store. Sainsbury's Community Champions will then shortlist from all nominations submitted, and representatives from the shortlisted charities will be asked to visit the store to talk to colleagues about what they do, how and why the Sainsbury's team should support them.

Why not get local people helping and:

- call in and introduce your branch to the Community Champion. Let them know about your branch and why the store should support you.
- ask local people to nominate your branch through your newsletter, personal contacts and at events. The more emotive nominations your branch gets, the better your branch's chance of being on the shortlist.
- you could prepare a short summary about your branch and have it available for people to include on nomination forms – this would make it easier for people to complete the form and ensure they are providing accurate details about what you do.
- does anyone you know have a connection with your local Sainsburys store? Such personal links can really help.

You can find information and resources to support your branch to be shortlisted on our volunteer website, <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/>

If you are shortlisted, your area fundraiser will be happy to help you prepare to present to the store about why you should be chosen. Good luck!

Fundraising

Promote celebration giving in your local area

Do you know someone that has a celebration coming up? Whether it's a wedding, anniversary, birthday or other occasion, they can share it with the MS Society.

Over the last few years, many people have chosen to support the MS Society by asking friends and family to make a donation instead of buying a gift for their special occasion.

To help add a 'splash of orange' and make every occasion a great success, we send out free party packs full of resources and ideas. And if a couple would like to celebrate their wedding or civil partnership with us, we can provide them with a card template and MS Society pin badges to use as wedding favours.

To find out more about how you can promote celebration giving in your local community, please call us on 0845 481 1577 or email fundraising@mssociety.org.uk.

Gift Aid – some frequently asked questions

The fundraising teams often receive a number of questions about Gift Aid. Gift Aid raised an additional £1,075 million for charities in 2011/2012 alone! So we've provided some quick questions and answers below to help you understand what Gift Aid is, and to make sure your branch is making the most of the Gift Aid owed to you.

What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid allows charities to reclaim tax from eligible donations from Her Majesty's Customs & Excise (HMRC). In real terms this means the charity receives more money at no additional expense to the individual donor.

How much can we claim?

Currently we get 25p back for every £1 donated. This means an additional 25% on every eligible donation which can represent a significant amount of money.

What are you eligible to claim?

- Membership fees
- Donations
- Regular bank credits
- Sponsorship income (providing it is received from a known individual)
- In memory donations

Fundraising

Eligible donations are donations which come from individuals who pay UK income tax and/ or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount of tax the branch wishes to claim in that tax year.

What donations are ineligible for Gift Aid?

- Gifts received more than 4 years ago
- Collection boxes
- Raffle tickets
- Anonymous donations
- Events income
- Trading income
- Legacies
- Company/Organisations income
- Collective sponsored event income
- Collective in memory donations
- Gifts from overseas
- Income where the donor has received a significant benefit
- Gifts from non-UK taxpayers
- Gifts from charitable trusts
- Grants

Will your branch benefit?

The total value of Gift Aid to your branch will vary depending on both the size and nature of your income. There are very few branches that won't find it worthwhile to claim.

How do you claim?

You need to register with HMRC. This can be done on their website at www.hmrc.gov.uk. Once you are successfully registered HMRC will send you a letter with your Charities Reference number.

Once you have this number you can begin to apply for Gift Aid. Any individual who would like Gift Aid applied to their donation must complete a Gift Aid declaration. This declaration can be written, verbal or submitted via the internet.

Can you claim for past donations?

Yes! You can claim for donations made in the last 4 years.

How often should you claim?

We recommend that branches make a claim once a year for donations received during the accounting year (1 Nov - 31 Oct).

Any more questions?

If you have any further questions or would like more information on how Gift Aid can help your branch contact the membership team on membership@mssociety.org.uk or 0845 300 0627.

Fundraising

Updates from the marketing team

Fundraising appeals

The fundraising letter we sent to supporters last November was our most successful campaign of 2012. Focussing on the groundbreaking research on the drugs amiloride and phenytoin to halt the progression of MS, it has raised £335,000. The March appeal, highlighting the importance of MS research, has raised over £60,000 to date with donations still coming in.

On the wave of these successes, we're planning to send out a few more fundraising letters in June. Members and donors will receive a letter asking to support our vital work, and in July we'll send a letter to people who have never donated to the MS Society before, to fundraise and spread awareness about MS.

Engaging with supporters via telephone

This May, we started calling some of our supporters to thank them for their wonderful donations in 2012 and ask them whether they would consider supporting the MS Society with a regular donation. Direct debits are safe, cost us very little to manage, and provide a regular source of income we can count on, which is essential for our research programmes and support services like the information library and the helpline. We're also trying to reach some members who have not renewed, to offer them the opportunity to support the MS Society in a different way.

Last year, our telephone campaigns were very successful, bringing in almost £100,000 in much needed extra funds. Hopefully this campaign will build on the success of the previous year.

Exclusive members only spring raffle

We have launched a new and improved raffle pack available exclusively to members. For the first time ever we are offering six prizes to celebrate our 60th year. We hope to raise £50,000 from this exciting new raffle and really hope all members will take part to help reach our goal.

For questions or feedback

You can contact the marketing team on marketing@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0904.

For England

Regional Events

To cover period from 26 April to 30 June 2013

North

Saturday 27 April	Volunteer Development day (Cheshire and Merseyside)
Wednesday 8 May	MS Support training day 2 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Thursday 9 May	MS Support training day 2 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Wednesday 22 May	Cumbria Wide MS Nurse Steering Group Meeting (North of England)
Thursday 23 May	MS Support training day 4 (Yorkshire and the Humber)
Friday 24 May	MS Support training day 4 (Yorkshire and the Humber)
Thursday 30 May	MS Support training day 1 (North of England)
Tuesday 4 June	MS Support training day 3 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Wednesday 5 June	MS Support training day 3 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Saturday 8 June	MS Support training day 1 (Yorkshire and the Humber)
Wednesday 12 June	Chairs and Lead Support volunteers forum (North of England)
Wednesday 12 June	MS Support training day 4 (Cheshire and Merseyside)
Saturday 15 June	Volunteer Induction Event (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Tuesday 18 June	Northumberland MS Nurse Steering Group Meeting (North of England)
Thursday 27 June	MS Support training day 4 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Friday 28 June	MS Support training day 4 (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Cumbria)
Saturday 29 June	Volunteer induction training (Yorkshire and the Humber)

East

Friday 26 April	Volunteer Forum (Essex)
Tuesday 7 May	Support Volunteers Forum (Essex)
Saturday 11 May	MS Support training day 2 (Thames Valley)
Saturday 18 May	Fundraising Development Day (Thames Valley)
Wednesday 22 May	MS Support training day 3 (Herts, Essex and Beds)

For England

Thursday 23 May	MS Support training day 3 (East Anglia)
Thursday 6 June	MS Support training day 3 (Thames Valley)
Wednesday 12 June	MS Support training day 4 (Herts, Essex and Beds)
Thursday 13 June	MS Support training day 4 (East Anglia)
Thursday 13 June	Research update (Lincoln)
Saturday 29 June	Volunteer Forum (Thames Valley)

London & South East

Saturday 27 April	Research update (Kent)
Wednesday 8 May	MS Support training day 3 (South London)
Thursday 9 May	MS Support training day 2 (North London)
Saturday 11 May	Chairs and Secretaries Forum (Surrey and Sussex)
Tuesday 4 June	MS Support training day 4 (North London)
Friday 7 June	MS Support training day 2 (South London)
Saturday 15 June	MS Support training day 1 (Surrey and Sussex)
Friday 21 June	Support Volunteers Forum (Kent)
Saturday 29 June	Fundraising Development Day (Kent)
Saturday 29 June	MS Support training day 2 (Surrey and Sussex)

West

Saturday 27 April	Fundraising Development Day (Hants & Islands)
Tuesday 21 May	MS Support Forum (South West, Devon and Cornwall)
Thursday 16 May	MS Support training day 3 (Hants and Islands)
Saturday 18 May	Research update (Wessex and West)
Wednesday 26 June	MS Support training day 3 (South west, Devon and Cornwall)
Thursday 27 June	MS Support training day 4 (Hants and Islands)

If you are interested in the support volunteer role, please contact your local staff member. If you are a support volunteer and you have not yet attended the training session(s) you are interested in attending, please email volunteertraining@mssociety.org.uk to request a booking form.

For all other events, please contact your local staff member for more information and to book a place.

For Northern Ireland

Health & Safety events risk assessments

Over the last two years risk management systems for branches have been put in place throughout the UK. Northern Ireland joined this process during 2012.

We are now rolling out the risk management systems for events. To help with this we have arranged induction training which will take place on:

Tuesday 11 June 2013 – Dunsilly Hotel Antrim from 10.30am-2.45pm

Wednesday 12 June 2013 – Silverbirch Hotel Omagh from 10.30am-2.45pm

Thursday 13 June 2013 – Resource Centre Belfast from 10.30am-2.45pm

It is advisable that at least one representative from each branch attends this training. Please advise your ADO of your branch representative as soon as possible.

You will receive support and training from your ADO and the Branch Health and Safety Officer.

MS Week – Parliamentary reception

This MS Week (29 April-5 May) we'll be hosting our annual Parliamentary reception at Parliament Buildings, Stormont on Tuesday 30 April from 2pm-4pm. This is an opportunity to meet your local MLA and tell them about the challenges facing people with MS throughout Northern Ireland.

We'll be launching our MS Week report based on the outcomes of our 'My MS, My Needs' survey and will also be celebrating our 60th anniversary.

Please contact Mark Hatte on 028 9080 2802 if you would like more information or to register.

Volunteer counselling service expands 'Time to Talk'

We're pleased to announce that Catherine Hannon has recently joined the MS Society as a voluntary counsellor.

Catherine has been in the caring profession since leaving school, she is a qualified mental health nurse, and has worked in Northern Ireland and abroad. Catherine recently decided to study counselling achieving her Certificate and Diploma within the counselling field. Catherine is registered

For Northern Ireland

with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and is looking forward to enhancing her skills in becoming a voluntary counsellor for the MS Society.

Catherine will be available from Thursday 4 April 2013 at our Resource Centre in Belfast. Catherine will be able to see clients every Thursday from 10am - 3pm.

If you are interested in making an appointment please contact the Resource Centre on 028 9080 2802 or email nireception@mssociety.org.uk.

Branch Area Forum – 15 May

We are pleased to announce the next Branch Area Forum will take place on Wednesday 15 May 2013 at the Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue from 10.30am - 2.30pm. There will be short presentations from Jo McGillivray, Communications Officer and Melanie Mead, Internal Communications Manager on Volunteer Communications Channels, Susan Carey with an update on MS Support and branches working together, and Samantha Creighton on fundraising.

All Branch Committee Members are welcome to attend. Please advise your ADO if you will be attending by emailing nidevelopmentteam@mssociety.org.uk.

Summer Camp

Our annual Young Peoples' Summer Camp will take place at the Share Centre Lisnaskea on Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 July 2013. The project involves an overnight stay for young people affected by MS from across NI. Participants should be aged 12 to 16 years old. For more information or to book your place, contact your local ADO or the Resource Centre on 028 9080 2802 or email nidevelopmentteam@mssociety.org.uk.

Fundraising Support

We could all do with a little extra support when it comes to fundraising in this difficult climate. The fundraising team is keen to offer help and support to all local branches. If you would like a member of the team to come along to your branch meeting to discuss fundraising ideas, please get in touch.

The team can provide a range of support from ideas and information about managing fundraising events to information about Gift Aid and tax efficient giving. Give us a call to arrange a visit.

The new NI Events leaflet has been distributed to our members and copies have now been sent to all branches. Please distribute these in your area.

It is worth noting some of our forthcoming events over the page:

For Northern Ireland

Cake Break will take place on Friday 3 May and most branches have already indicated that they will be hosting a Cake Break event. If you haven't signed up yet – it's not too late! If you'd like more information get in touch with Tom Mallon or Samantha Creighton in the fundraising team.

Looking ahead we have our '**Hope on a Rope**' **abseil event** taking place off the Europa Hotel in Belfast on Sunday 9 June. We have also added two new **Zip Slide** events on 27 and 28 July, following our sold out Lagan Zip Slide in March.

We are also holding an **MS Skydive** on Sunday 23 June 2013 at Garvagh Airfield.

If you prefer to keep your feet on the ground then our **Moonlight Walk** on Slieve Donard might be for you. This will take place on Saturday 17 August. We're also hosting our ever popular **Ben Nevis Challenge** during the weekend of 13-15 September.

All these events offer a great opportunity for branches to raise funds with little effort required in terms of organisation!

Get in touch with the fundraising team for more information on any of these events by calling 028 9080 2802 or email screighton@mssociety.org.uk.

For Scotland

Join us at our Annual Meeting in Perth

The Scotland Council will hold its Annual Meeting on 14 June in Perth. The Council are 10 volunteers who represent people affected by MS in Scotland and work on your behalf.

The Council's Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to hear about what was achieved during 2012 and what is planned for the rest of 2013. A few highlights we've got planned this year include:

- 1 an opportunity to hear about the latest exciting developments in MS research from an eminent MS researcher
- 2 a interactive workshop session discussing new ways in which the MS Society can better engage people living with MS
- 3 an opportunity to discuss what issues are important to you with others who care passionately about improving the lives of those living with MS in Scotland

Many members have said one of the biggest benefits they get from attending MS Society events like the Annual Meeting is networking with others, and this is a fantastic opportunity to meet members of the Scotland Council, MS Society staff and members and volunteers from across Scotland.

So make sure you register your place soon. You can register online at www.mssociety.org.uk/scotlandcouncilmeeting or by contacting Garry Kinnear,

on gkinnear@mssociety.org.uk or on 0131 335 4050.

Scotland Council recruitment

Refer to page 8 for available positions.

Dates for support volunteer training: Glasgow and The Borders

We are pleased to announce the following dates for training all new and existing support volunteers who have yet to complete it.

Day 1: Introduction to MS support

Friday 17 May – West Park Centre, 319 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1NN

Saturday 18 May – Holiday Inn & Express by Holiday Inn, 161-165 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RL

Day 2: Introduction to skills for providing support

Friday 31 May – West Park Centre, 319 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1NN

Saturday 1 June – Holiday Inn & Express by Holiday Inn, 161-165 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RL

Day 3: Introduction to providing information

Friday 21 June – West Park Centre, 319 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1NN

Saturday 22 June – Holiday Inn & Express by Holiday Inn, 161-165 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RL

For Scotland

Day 4: Introduction to financial support

Friday 5 July – West Park Centre,
319 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1NN

Saturday 6 July – Holiday Inn & Express
by Holiday Inn, 161-165 West Nile Street,
Glasgow G1 2RL

Additional Day 1 in the Borders

Thursday 4 July – Tweed Horizons Business
Centre, Melrose

Award season

In the last edition of Teamspirit you'll have read all about the MS Society Awards, but we'd also like to remind you about the Saltire Awards. These Scottish awards are designed to recognise the commitment and contribution of young people who volunteer.

Supported by the Scottish Government, the Saltire Awards are designed to encourage, enable and reward youth volunteering and to make it easy for organisations to support young people to take part – they are a great way to inspire young people to get involved with your branch.

Teenagers Alexandra and Allan were given Saltire Awards for their work with the Paisley Branch of the MS Society, attracting media coverage for the branch and encouraging other young people to volunteer.

They then went on to be finalists in the 'Young Person of the Year' category of last year's MS Society Awards, creating even more awareness of the great opportunities volunteering offers and the work of our branches.

Find out more about the awards at www.saltireawards.org.uk. You can also contact the MS Society Scotland's Volunteering Manager for a chat about how to encourage young volunteers. Call Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

You can find out more about the MS Society awards on our website at <http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-events/2013/01/ms-society-awards-2013>. Nominations have now closed so we are waiting with baited breath to find out who the nominees are!

Let us know your training needs

Have you recruited new volunteers for your branch? Please contact Lynda Boyce to ensure they receive a welcome and information pack and to organise an induction session for them.

If you feel your branch has any particular volunteer training needs please contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

For Scotland

PVG checks

Coming soon: several volunteers who completed the Disclosure Check under the previous legislation will soon be receiving a letter to organise an appointment to complete a new application under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) legislation. This check is only applicable to a small number of roles within the MS Society and there is a legal requirement to ensure this is carried out. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

MS Week in Scotland: Parliamentary reception and 60th anniversary exhibition

During MS Week we will be launching the results of the 'My MS, My Needs' survey at a reception at the Scottish Parliament on 1 May, to get loud to MSPs about the challenges facing people with MS in Scotland.

Exhibition

We'll also be running an exhibition in Parliament during MS Week. As it's our 60th anniversary this year we're going to be reflecting back over our journey so far and the milestones for the MS Society and the MS community in Scotland. We'll also be looking forward to the breakthroughs and challenges coming up. Thank you to all the branches and individuals who have got in touch with us with your milestones – the exhibition will continue to grow throughout the year so if you are a budding branch historian please keep researching!

Contacting your MSP

Why not get in touch with your local MSP and remind them about MS Week; you could ask them to show their support by visiting our exhibition and reception. Together we'll keep MS on the agenda. You can find out who your MSP is and how to contact them on the Scottish Parliament website: www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps

Your plans

What are you doing during MS Week? Please let us know so we can build a picture of what's happening across Scotland. Please get in touch with Hannah Maunder at hmaunder@mssociety.org.uk or call 0131 335 4050.

For Scotland

Loch Ness Marathon

The Loch Ness Marathon, which takes place on **Saturday 29 September**, is open for entries, and the MS Society will once again be looking for enthusiastic runners to sign up and take part in the Baxter's Loch Ness Marathon festival of events.

During our 60th anniversary year, the MS Society is also delighted to announce that we have been chosen as one of the lead affiliate charities at this event, which will give us much more exposure in the lead up to the event, and hopefully help us to encourage more runners to take part and raise more funds to help us support our vital work.

If you or someone you know is keen on joining "Team MS" and taking part in either the marathon, the River Ness 10k or the 5K, we would be delighted to have you on the team. There are still standard entry places, or charity places available. For more information, or to sign up visit www.lochnessmarathon.com

Dundee Abseil

We have been lucky enough to secure 10 places at the Dundee University Tower Abseil on **Saturday 24 August** this year, and we are looking for keen and enthusiastic people to take part in this exciting event. It's a 140ft abseil down the iconic building, which has amazing views from the top (vouched for by our area fundraiser Sarah Farquhar, who has already taken the plunge!)

The registration fee for this event is £20.82 (there is an 82p credit card charge) and all participants are asked to raise £120 sponsorship each.

If you are interested in signing up to take part in this event, please email msfundraising@mssociety.org.uk and we can provide you with the link to the online booking system. As we have limited spaces, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

For Wales

MS Linc

In 2011 and 2012 we reviewed the magazines we send to our members, supporters and other key audiences. We found that although members valued MS Linc, and similar magazines in Northern Ireland and Scotland, they also place a premium on our magazines being produced cost effectively.

Taking these findings into consideration, staff from across the UK are now working together to relaunch a new-look MS Matters with nation-specific sections that will vary depending on where the reader lives. This new model will allow you to get all of the benefits of MS Linc, but as part of a single MS Society magazine. The magazine will increase the frequency of nation specific news reaching our members, prevent duplication between magazines, and will save the MS Society around £40,000 per year by producing just one magazine across the UK.

Due to staff changes within the Wales office the January edition of MS Linc was the last edition of the magazine. Members will continue to receive MS Matters at present and during the summer the new combined magazine will be launched.

We would like to thank all of the members who have contributed to MS Linc over the years, and hope that you will be able to contribute to our new combined magazine. If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Matthews on 029 2078 6676 or email jmatthews@mssociety.org.uk.

Annual Meeting

Following last year's successful meeting, this summer we would like to invite you to our 2013 Annual Meeting on **6 July** at the Wrexham Ramada Plaza Hotel.

Further details will be available nearer the time, but to book your space please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/wales or mscymru@mssociety.org.uk

Help us campaign for better services in Wales

On Tuesday 30 April as part of MS Week we are launching a report entitled 'A lottery of treatment and care – MS services across the UK'. The report follows a comprehensive survey of people with MS across Wales and gives a crucial insight into issues faced day to day. The report covers access to healthcare and treatment, social care, mobility, employment and benefits.

The event will be from 12.00 - 1.15pm in the Senedd. This important piece of work reflects the concerns and aspirations of people living with MS in Wales. We have a series of recommendations we will be putting to the Welsh Government and would like members to join us on the day to support this campaign.

If you'd like any further information about the report or the event, then please contact Jamie Matthews on 029 2078 6676 or email jmatthews@mssociety.org.uk.

For Wales

Living with MS event – Swansea

For those affected by MS in any way we welcome you to come along to our free 'Living with MS Day' at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea on 15 June.

Registration is at 9am and the event will be held from 10am - 4.30pm. There will be a variety of speakers and workshops with a focus on research, managing MS and MS in the family. It will also be a chance to meet up with other people in the same circumstances to offer a source of mutual support and information.

If you are interested in attending this exciting free event then please contact the conference team on 020 8438 0700 or email conferenceadmin@mssociety.org.uk. We hope to see you there!

Classified Adverts

Please share these opportunities in your publications and networks.

Wheel and walk T-shirts

The Leighton Buzzard and District branch have 70 new MS Wheel & Walk T-shirts available in various sizes for a suggested donation of 50p each.

For details please email branch secretary Lorna Taylor at taylorm@tesco.net or phone 01525 377099. Delivery arrangements can be discussed.

Accessible caravan

The North Surrey branch has a two-bed accessible caravan with full veranda and wheelchair ramp access available for holiday hire based at Church Farm in Pagham, West Sussex.

The Rio Willoughby is a comfortable and stylish caravan specifically designed with the needs of wheelchair users in mind. It has a spacious lounge/diner, a kitchen with lowered work surfaces, a bathroom with walk-in shower and two bedrooms.

Church Farm is a 5* Haven site with a great entertainment schedule and two swimming pools.

For further information, please contact Caroline Keenan on 020 8393 7750.

Mention of advertisement by the MS Society of products or services is not an endorsement by the MS Society, its officers or staff.

Holiday Lodge

The North Norfolk Branch has just acquired a new Boston Lodge at Burgh Castle near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk for people with MS, families and carers. The lodge sleeps six with a bed-settee in the lounge, a twin room with en suite shower and a double room with overhead hoists running into a wet room. The cost is £200 from Saturday to Saturday. For park amenities please visit parkdean.com. For availability ring Sue 01263 578 148 or contact suewright48@btinternet.com.

Lisnaskea

MS Society Northern Ireland has two fully accessible chalets available for hire at the SHARE village in Lisnaskea. The cost is £200 per week and includes a SHARE fitness leisure pass. Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis.

To book a holiday please contact Mark on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk.

Amberwood Holiday Lodge

West Herts Branch has a holiday lodge at Shorefield Holiday Village, near Lymington, Hampshire, for people with MS, families and carers. The chalet has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and lounge/kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. Bookings can be made by calling Richard Smith on 07709 235 729. (Please leave a message if necessary and we will call you back.)

Teamspirit directory

MS Society

MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0700

MS Society Cymru

Temple Court
Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HA
02920 786 676

MS Society

Northern Ireland

The Resource Centre
34 Annadale Avenue
Belfast
BT7 3JJ
02890 802 802

MS Society Scotland

National Office
Ratho Park
88 Glasgow Road
Ratho Station
Newbridge
EH28 8PP
0131 335 4050

Support groups

There are support group for Jewish people, lesbians and gay men, Afro-Caribbean people, Asian people, and former and serving members of the armed forces.
020 8438 0856
susmani@mssociety.org.uk

Find us online

www.mssociety.org.uk

www.facebook.com/mssociety
www.twitter.com/mssocietyuk

www.youngms.org.uk

www.facebook.com/childrenwithMS

Grants

020 8438 0700
grants@mssociety.org.uk
(England, Wales, Northern Ireland)
0131 335 4081
grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk
(Scotland)

National MS Helpline

0808 800 8000

MS Information Line

020 8438 0799

Membership

020 8438 0759

Volunteering

020 8438 0944

Fundraising

0870 241 3565

Teamspirit

MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0944
teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk